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Noncommunicable diseases cause 9 out of 10 deaths in the WHO European Region. WHO is creating political momentum to fight these ‘silent killers’

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Today, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) account for 90% of deaths in countries of the WHO European Region. That means an estimated **nine million people** die each year from causes that are largely preventable. To win the fight against NCDs, WHO wants to inspire and engage agents of change – health professionals and decision makers who fully understand the scale of this threat and are willing to contribute to a better future for new generations.

“Many cases of cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes and other NCDs could be prevented with cost-effective policies based on scientific evidence. But a lot more needs to be done at multiple levels”, said Dr Nino Berdzuli, Director of the Division of Country Health Programmes at WHO/Europe.

“Healthier policies that can help are within arm’s reach – but we need stakeholders from many sectors across government and civil society to be ready to stand up and make them work.”

NCD Advisory Council meeting – a chance to bring change

To create and strengthen political momentum and share the most effective practices that can reduce morbidity and mortality from NCDs, the WHO Regional Director for Europe’s NCD Advisory Council on Innovation for Noncommunicable Diseases holds its fifth plenary meeting in Berlin, Germany on 9 November.

[The meeting is one of the preconference events at the annual European Public Health Conference \(EPHC\) which brings together over 2,500 health experts from across the European Region.](#)

From alcohol taxes to digital marketing: six initiatives to beat NCDs in Europe

In Berlin, the NCD Advisory Council will seek to unite efforts with the extensive European Public Health Association (EUPHA) network and develop a joint plan for the coming year. The plan, whose impact will be regularly evaluated, will be based on the following six Signature Initiatives created by the NCD Advisory Council that address priority issues by raising awareness of evidence-based solutions:

- Ensuring a healthier future for Europe’s children by tackling **childhood overweight and obesity**;
- Raising the untapped potential of health taxes, focusing on **alcohol**;
- Reducing inequalities in **cardiovascular diseases** burden and **high blood pressure** prevalence, through improving **hypertension control** in primary health care, and implementing **salt reduction strategies**;
- Protecting children and young people from **digital marketing of unhealthy products**;
- Greener and healthier cities — improving **air quality and healthy mobility**;
- The big unlock — harnessing the power of **data and digital health** in NCDs.

The NCD Advisory Council and EUPHA plan will help pave the path towards the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of NCDs in 2025, elevating Europe’s leadership role in tackling NCDs.

“NCDs are often termed silent killers, and don’t capture the headlines as do, say, emerging infectious diseases that trigger outbreaks and pandemics like COVID-19,” noted Dr Hans Henri P Kluge, Regional Director, WHO/Europe. “We need to create much more visibility about the toll NCDs take, underpinned by consistent, long-term commitment by governments and other stakeholders, including political will and advocacy translated into optimal investments and resources. We know what needs to be done. It’s time to act.”

More information:

- Website of WHO Regional Office for Europe: <https://www.who.int/>
- Press Registration: <https://ephconference.eu/press-information-128>

For further enquiries and interview arrangements, please contact:

Tina Kiaer
Communications Officer
WHO Regional Office for Europe
kiaert@who.int
+45 3036 3776